

Biblical Discipleship

6



PRAYER



LESSON 6: PRAYER

"How Important is Prayer in My Life?"

Someone once said that a Christian is only as strong as his prayer life. There is a great deal of truth in this because prayer is simply your direct communication to God. When you read the Bible, God speaks to you; and when you pray, you speak to God. Your personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ cannot grow without proper communication.

The purpose of this lesson is to acquaint the individual with the basics of a proper prayer life so that these lines of communication can be open and effective in his life.

- I. What is the purpose of prayer?
 - A. It is NOT to move God for you or change His mind; it is for you to be conformed to His will.
 - B. A proper prayer life results in peace of heart and mind.

Philippians 4:6-7

- * C. To draw you close to God so He can prove His sufficiency for every need.

1. God is active in every detail of your life, and He knows exactly what you need even before you ask.

Matthew 6:8

- * 2. God allows needs to come into your life so He can draw you to Him to meet with Him.

Psalm 50:15

- 3. The most dangerous time in your life is when every single need is met, and you have need of nothing — including God.

Revelation 3:16-17

- 4. God uses those needs to draw you to a place where He can bless you and reveal to you that your only real need is simply the Lord Jesus Christ and His grace. The classic example of this tremendously important principle is Paul's thorn in the flesh.

II Corinthians 12:7-10

- 5. This is why it is absolutely essential to give thanks in everything, including and especially the needs and difficult times of your life.

I Thessalonians 5:18

- 6. That is also why it is absolutely essential to develop a consistent prayer attitude where your first reaction in a difficult moment is to go to God in prayer.

I Thessalonians 5:17

II. How do I pray?

A. First, *Romans 8:26-27* makes it clear that we don't always know how to pray or what to pray for. That is why the Holy Spirit who lives inside you intercedes for you in prayer.

B. But there are some basic guidelines.

1. Pray always — develop a lifestyle of prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1

2. Don't repeat the same words over and over.

Matthew 6:7

3. Talk to the Lord as a friend. He is your friend!

John 15:13-14; Exodus 33:11; Proverbs 18:24

4. Realize that you have DIRECT access to God personally. You do not need to go through any man to talk to God.

1 Timothy 2:5; Ephesians 2:18

C. Be sure to keep your basic relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ proper. There are some things in your life which will hinder your prayers.

1. Unconfessed sin. *Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalm 66:18*

2. An unforgiving spirit. *Matthew 6:14-15*

3. Bitterness toward your mate (as well as others).
1 Peter 3:7
4. Not asking. *James 4:2*
5. Asking with selfish or other wrong motives.
James 4:3; Proverbs 21:13
6. Insensitivity to the word of God. *Proverbs 28:9*

III. There are four basic types of prayer. *1 Timothy 2:1*

- A. Supplication — specific requests. *Philippians 4:6* says to "...let your requests be made known unto God." Too many prayers are wasted because they are so general.

For example: "God please give me a blessing."

"Which one? How do you want me to bless you?"

- B. Prayers — This is the summation; the term used to classify all communication with God.
- C. Intercessions — prayers for others. This is important to keep your motives pure and keep your selfish eyes off yourself.
- D. Giving of thanks — *Psalms 100:4* makes it clear that

Key memory verses:

1 Timothy 2:5; Psalm 66:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:18

NOTE: In many churches today, some popular teachings are:

1. Man should pray to idols, saints or other men.
2. If you pray long enough or hard enough, God will change His mind and do what you want.
3. The best prayers are those which have been written by others and are just "said" by you.
4. Prayer must be at a set time in a set format.

From the Bible principles taught in this lesson, you should understand that these teachings are false, and why.

Write any questions you may have concerning the subjects in this lesson.

10. God answers your prayers, but not always the way you expect. His answer will sometimes be _____ or _____.
11. Man is instructed not to pray to idols or to other men. Explain *1 Timothy 2:5* in light of this truth.
12. Briefly explain the primary purpose of this lesson.

we enter the presence of God through thanksgiving and praise.

IV. Keep track of your prayer requests.

- A. Making a list will help you remember what to pray for. Otherwise your prayer life will not be consistent.
- B. Keeping a list of answered prayers is tremendously important to reinforce our faith in God's ability to answer prayer.

V. Basic questions.

- A. Does God answer all my prayers?

Yes, but not always the way you may want Him to, or at the time you want Him to. As we learned in lesson one, God is your Heavenly Father and all His ways are perfect. There will be times when in His infinite wisdom, the best answer to prayer will be "NO" or "NOT YET." In those times, simply trust Him.

- B. How important is it to pray for others?

1. Paul prayed for others continually, (*Romans 1:9*) and requested prayer on many occasions.

Hebrews 13:18; II Thessalonians 3:1

2. Samuel said it was a sin against God not to pray for others.

I Samuel 12:23

3. An example of effectual prayer for others is how a preacher from England named George Mueller prayed for the salvation of several people for up to 60 years. When he died, some were still lost. However, there were some saved at his funeral, and many others were saved within the next year.
4. Keep at it. The full results of your prayers will never be known completely in this life.

8. List the attitudes that will interfere with your prayer life.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

9. What are two ways that help you keep your prayer requests in order?

A.

B.

4. Give the situation that is most dangerous for a Christian to be in.

NOTES

5. According to *1 Thessalonians 5:18*, we are to give thanks in everything. This includes the _____ and _____ of our lives.

6. What should be your first reaction in a tough situation?

7. There are some primary principles concerning prayer. Briefly explain them from the following verses.

A. *1 Thessalonians 5:17*

B. *Matthew 6:7*

C. *Exodus 33:11*

NOTES

PRAYER Lesson #6

1. What is something prayer does NOT accomplish?

2. What is the result of a good prayer life?

3. Prayer keeps you close to God so He can prove His sufficiency for your every need. What do the following verses teach us about God and our needs?
 - A. *Matthew 6:8*

 - B. *Psalms 50:15*